

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 20, 2007

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 9, 2007

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007–08 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 18

Introduced by Assembly Member Solorio

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Adams, Aghazarian, Arambula, Bass, Beall, Berg, Caballero, Charles Calderon, Carter, Coto, Davis, De La Torre, De Leon, DeSaulnier, Dymally, Eng, Feuer, Hancock, Hayashi, Hernandez, Horton, Jones, Karnette, Krekorian, Laird, Leno, Levine, Lieber, Ma, Mendoza, Mullin, Nakanishi, Nava, Nunez, Parra, Portantino, Price, Richardson, Ruskin, Saldana, Swanson, Tran, and Wolk)

(Coauthors: Senators Cedillo, Negrete McLeod, and Romero)

February 23, 2007

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 18—Relative to naturalization.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 18, as amended, Solorio. Legal permanent residents: United States citizenship.

This bill would memorialize the Legislature's opposition to a proposed *an* increase in the fees for legal permanent residents to begin the naturalization process by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and would call upon the President and the Congress to address the nation's system of financing immigration services.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, California is home to many hard-working,
- 2 taxpaying, legal permanent residents who are eager to become

1 full-fledged Americans by pursuing the dream of United States
2 citizenship; and

3 ~~WHEREAS, On January 31~~ *May 30*, 2007, the United States
4 Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ~~announced a~~
5 ~~proposal that would raise~~ *issued a final rule increasing* the fees
6 for starting the naturalization process from \$400 to \$675, an
7 increase of 69 percent; and

8 ~~WHEREAS, The USCIS anticipates that the fee hike will go~~
9 ~~into effect in June 2007; and~~

10 *WHEREAS, Under the final rule, which was published in the*
11 *Federal Register on May 30, 2007, at 72 Fed. Reg. 29851, the fee*
12 *hike went into effect on July 30, 2007; and*

13 WHEREAS, Naturalization fees have been soaring since 1991,
14 when newcomers paid \$90 to apply for United States citizenship;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Naturalization fee increases result from our nation's
17 system of financing immigration services, which requires the
18 USCIS to rely almost exclusively on application fees to fund the
19 delivery of services to immigrants; and

20 WHEREAS, The USCIS believes that it needs this massive fee
21 hike to pay for major infrastructure investments and process
22 enhancements, such as improvements in the timeliness of
23 background checks, modernization of its outdated business systems
24 through technology upgrades, facilities improvements, and
25 enhancements in its personnel training and recruitment programs;
26 and

27 *WHEREAS, The USCIS has not adequately explained or justified*
28 *the amounts and distributions of its recent fee increases; and*

29 *WHEREAS, The USCIS had produced no specific, detailed plan*
30 *for its infrastructure modernization efforts; and*

31 *WHEREAS, The USCIS has suffered from a lack of transparency*
32 *and stability in its operations and policy development; and*

33 WHEREAS, There are at least 2.3 million legal permanent
34 residents in California who are eligible to apply for United States
35 citizenship; and

36 WHEREAS, According to data from the 2000 census, about
37 one-third (36 percent) of California noncitizen households have
38 annual incomes that are less \$25,000; and

39 ~~WHEREAS, The proposed fee increase would place fee increase~~
40 *will be* a nearly insurmountable barrier in the path of legal

1 permanent residents who seek to naturalize, many of whom have
2 limited financial resources; and

3 WHEREAS, We believe that our system for funding immigration
4 services should be a partnership between newcomers and the
5 federal government where applicants pay a reasonable fee for
6 quality service; and

7 *WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution 47, introduced into the*
8 *United States House of Representatives on June 30, 2007,*
9 *disapproves of the final rule implementing the fee increase and*
10 *declares that the rule shall have no force or effect; and*

11 WHEREAS, The ~~proposed~~ fee increase is contrary to the spirit
12 of our nation's and state's tradition of welcoming and integrating
13 immigrants, and sends newcomers the wrong message at a time
14 when they are seeking to embrace United States citizenship; and

15 WHEREAS, Naturalization benefits California by helping to
16 ensure that newcomers become full participants in our nation's
17 civic life; and

18 WHEREAS, The full participation of newcomers enriches and
19 maintains the vitality of our democracy; now, therefore, be it

20 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
21 *California, jointly, That the Legislature adamantly opposes the*
22 *~~proposed~~ fee increase by USCIS and demands a halt on the fee*
23 *increase for all naturalization applications; and be it further*

24 *RESOLVED, That the Legislature expresses its strong support*
25 *for House Joint Resolution 47, and calls upon all members of*
26 *California's Congressional delegation to cosponsor and support*
27 *the swift enactment of the resolution; and be it further*

28 *Resolved, That the Legislature calls on the Director of the USCIS*
29 *to immediately provide President George W. Bush and the*
30 *Congress with accurate information to ascertain the amount of*
31 *federal appropriations that would be needed to enable the USCIS*
32 *to modernize its operations, and enhance its naturalization services,*
33 *without raising the naturalization fee; and be it further*

34 *Resolved, That the Legislature calls on President George W.*
35 *Bush and the Congress to address the fundamental problems in*
36 *our nation's system for financing immigration services by*
37 *providing appropriations to supplement fee revenue to cover costs*
38 *of major USCIS expenses such as infrastructure investments,*
39 *process enhancements, and capital improvements; and be it further*

1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
2 of this resolution to the Director of the United States Citizenship
3 and Immigration Services, the President of the United States, *all*
4 *members of California's Congressional delegation*, the Speaker
5 of the House of Representatives, and the President pro Tempore
6 of the Senate for inclusion in the Congressional Record.

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